

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 8, 2003

The Honorable James G. Roche  
Department of the Air Force  
Pentagon, 1670 Air Force, RM 4E871  
Washington D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Roche,

Most of us wrote to you last year on April 12, 2002, expressing our serious concern and opposition to moving the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing from Moffett Federal Airfield in the San Francisco Bay Area. We received a letter from Colonel Groves on June 11, 2002 informing us that the issues we raised in opposition to the move would be taken into serious consideration. We understand you are now reviewing the recommendation to move the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing and request that you meet with us at your earliest convenience before you make a final decision.

On June 27, 2003 we learned about a very troubling recent disclosure made to Congresswoman Eshoo regarding a move of the 129<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Wing from Moffett Federal Air Field to Castle Airport in Merced County, California.

Astonishingly, Guard Command has indicated to your staff that no community opposition exists to the move. They further advise that the new hangar recently erected at taxpayer expense for \$16 million be abandoned and that an additional \$45 million (or more) be spent to reopen a **closed** California Air Force Base located in the Central Valley. This makes no economic sense given the state of the economy and the investment of tax dollars already made to benefit the Air Force in the Bay Area. The notion that the retention level of trained 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing personnel will improve is patently false, as is any suggestion that the delegation supports the move.

We're outraged that internal Guard documents have been used in presentations to your leadership staff conveying 'no community opposition' to the relocation. Nothing could be further from the truth. During her decade of service in Congress, Congresswoman Eshoo has consistently sought and secured the delegation's support for the needs of the 129<sup>th</sup> at Moffett and we have willingly worked with her to make the requests a reality. To suggest in any way that the 129<sup>th</sup> move and that she supports this is not only incorrect ...it is blatantly wrong.

Given the distortions of fact in the Guard Command's report, we want to make certain that you know that NASA Ames has offered to honor the spirit of the commitment made to the Air Force by Dale Compton in his 1993 letter. This means the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing's share of the support costs will be limited to the originally agreed upon amount (\$1,310K during FY 1995). In addition to this very generous rate (a rollback to 1993 levels), NASA Ames has also agreed to a sign a long-term agreement with 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing.

We must underscore the fact that the figures used in Guard Command presentations relative to the cost of living in the Bay Area are grossly exaggerated and based on data calculated during the "dot com" boom.

The cost of living is higher in the Bay Area than other parts of the country, however, the costs of buying or renting homes have recently leveled out and have even declined. Housing for service men and women remains available at Moffett Field, and the local communities are committed to assisting us to identify more affordable housing locations. While the additional housing locations may not be in some of the more affluent areas such as Saratoga, there are a number of wonderful cities located less than an hour away that offer readily available, affordable housing.

The millions of people who call the Bay Area home are vulnerable to attack. The single largest public safety concern to us now are the possibility of terrorist attacks and weapons of mass destruction. As a Member of the House Intelligence Committee, Congresswoman Eshoo has deep concerns on these very issues. The 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing is trained for operations in treacherous environments, not to mention the technological abilities they have which enable them to provide a significant level of assistance to State and local disaster management specialists.

While the 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team's (CST) mission is to respond to a WMD attack and is also located in the Bay Area, the 129<sup>th</sup> can greatly enhance CST's ability to respond to an event in one of our large cities such as San Jose or San Francisco. Moreover, the 129<sup>th</sup>'s centralized location at Moffett Field is an excellent place to locate and establish a state-of-the-art intelligence integration facility for command, control, communications and the coordination of incoming intelligence and, if necessary, a triangle or quarantine as an event unfolds such as occurred during the Loma Prieta Earthquake in October, 1989. In fact, NASA Ames is very interested in working jointly with the Air Rescue on disaster-preparedness training.

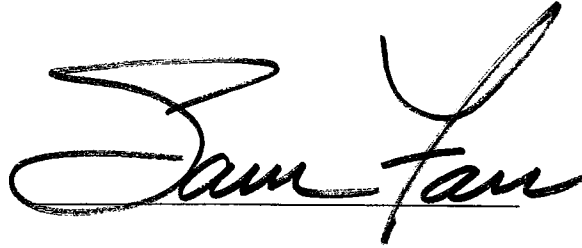
The last and most important consideration we would like to share with you concerns the issue of retention. We dismiss the argument that moving away from the Bay Area will increase the retention rate of the 129<sup>th</sup>. Many of the people in the 129<sup>th</sup> have deep ties to our communities, including family, schools, and homes. The men and women of the 129<sup>th</sup> have not been asked (as a unit) if they wish to remain with the 129<sup>th</sup> if they are required to move away from the Bay Area. Many have expressed their attachments to the area and their sadness at the prospect of leaving it. Given the magnificent service these brave men and women have performed on our collective behalf, we think it's wrong to ask them to make more sacrifices.


We underscore our complete and total opposition to moving the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing away from the Bay Area. We urge you to call a halt to this misguided and questionable effort. To diminish the readiness to respond to a disaster in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley is imprudent, to walk away from millions of dollars of improvements made for the 129<sup>th</sup> at Moffett is wasteful, and to ignore the significant progress made with NASA on a host of critical issues is baffling. The proposed move could not be made without appropriations of tens of millions of dollars and does not take into consideration the long-term view of what, arguably is the world's most advanced high technology area in our country.

We urge you to keep the 129<sup>th</sup> at Moffett and know that the misrepresentations of community and congressional support for a move are exactly that ... misrepresentations. We look forward to receiving your timely response.


Sincerely,

 Anna Escobedo

 Sam Yuen

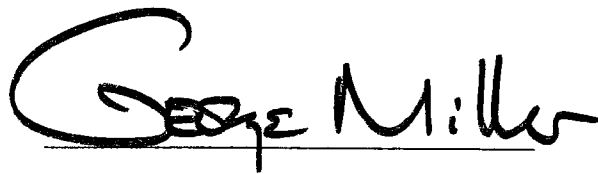
 Michael M. Honda

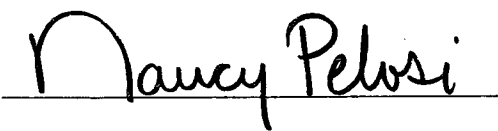
 Zoe Lofgren

 Lynn Woolsey

 Tom Lantos

 Pete Stark

 George Miller

 Nancy Pelosi

 Ellen O. Tauscher

 Barbara Lee